

## FUNDING SOURCES AFFECT OUTCOMES OF MOBILE PHONE STUDIES

The use of mobile telephones has increased rapidly in recent years. The emission of low-level radiofrequency electromagnetic fields leading to the absorption of radiation by the brain in users of hand-held mobile phones has raised concerns regarding potential effects on health (Rothman, 2000). However, the studies examining this issue have produced conflicting results, and there is ongoing debate on this issue (Ahlbom et al., 2004; Feychting et al., 2005).

Many of the relevant studies have been funded by the telecommunications industry, and thus may have resulted in conflicts of interest (Thompson, 1993).

Recent systematic reviews of the influence of financial interests in medical research concluded that there is a strong association between industry sponsorship and pro-industry conclusions (Bekelman et al., 2003; Yaphe et al., 2001). This association has not been examined in the context of the studies of potential adverse effects of mobile phone use.

Researchers at the University of Berne, University of Bristol and University of Basel conducted a systematic review of studies of controlled exposure to radiofrequency radiation with health-related outcomes (electroencephalogram,



cognitive or cardiovascular function, hormone levels, symptoms and subjective well-being). Of 59 studies, 12 (20%) were funded exclusively by the telecommunications industry, 11 (19%) were funded by public agencies or charities, 14 (24%) had mixed funding (including by industry), and in 22 studies (37%) the source of funding was not reported. The researchers concluded that interpretation of results from studies of health effects of radiofrequency radiation should take sponsorship into account.

(Source: University of Berne, Switzerland, <http://www.ehponline.org/members/2006/9149/9149.html>)

## HEALTH FEARS LEAD SCHOOLS TO DISMANTLE WIRELESS NETWORKS

Parents and teachers are forcing some schools in the UK to dismantle wireless computer networks amid fears that they could damage children's health.

More schools are putting transmitters in classrooms to give pupils wireless access from laptops to the school computer network and the Internet.

But many parents and some scientists fear that low levels of microwave radiation emitted by the transmitters could be harmful, causing loss of concentration, headaches, fatigue, memory and behavioural problems and possibly cancer in the long term.

At the Prebendal School, a prestigious preparatory school in Chichester, West Sussex, a group of parents lobbied the head teacher, Tim Cannell, to remove the wireless network last month.

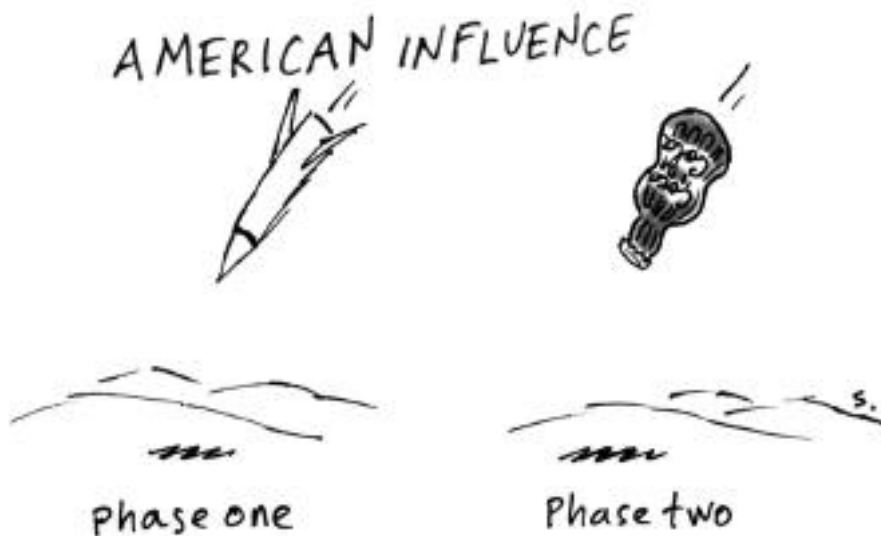
Mr Cannell told the *Times*: "We listened to the parents' views and they were obviously very concerned. We also did a lot of research. The authorities say it is safe, but there have been no long-term studies to prove this."

Judith Davies, who has a daughter at the school, said: "Many people campaign against mobile phone masts near schools, but there is a great deal of ignorance about wireless computer networks. Yet they are like having a phone mast in the classroom and the transmitters are placed very close to the children."

Stowe School, the Buckinghamshire public school, also removed part of its wireless network after a teacher became ill. Michael Bevington, a classics teacher for 28 years at the school, said that he had such a violent reaction to the network that he was too ill to teach.

"I felt a steadily widening range of unpleasant effects whenever I was in the classroom," he said. "First came a thick headache, then pains throughout the body, sudden flushes, pressure behind the eyes, sudden skin pains and burning sensations, along with bouts of nausea. Over the weekend, away from the classroom, I felt completely normal."

(Source: The Times, UK, 20 November 2006, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,591-2461748,00.html>)



## NZ SCIENTIST MAKES DNA COMPUTER BREAKTHROUGH

A New Zealand scientist has developed a computer chip made from DNA molecules—the building blocks of life—that can store and execute computer programs within the body.

Privately funded Albany-based physicist Graemme Brown has succeeded where major companies, which have poured millions into research, have yet to make the breakthrough.

The DNA tablet can be swallowed or inserted into the body and used to track down genetic defects and some illnesses. Unlike conventional silicon chips, it does not rely on conventional binary code, instead using the much more powerful alpha-numeric code.

A DNA molecule contains up to 100 billion instructions for building a human body and is vastly more powerful than any existing computer.

Brown says a huge advantage of the discovery is that DNA computing can be used with current technology but will also open up the scientific frontier for bio-computing. He says the implications for that are "staggering".

A statement announcing the breakthrough says the innovation has the potential to create nanotech biocomputers much more powerful than achieved with current silicon technology.

(Source: North Shore Times, *New Zealand*, 28 October 2006, via <http://www.stuff.co.nz/3842006a28.html>)

## RENOWNED CANCER SCIENTIST PAID BY CHEMICAL COMPANY

A world-famous British scientist failed to disclose that he held a paid consultancy with a chemical company for more than 20 years while investigating cancer risks in the industry.

Sir Richard Doll, the celebrated epidemiologist who established that smoking causes lung cancer, was receiving a consultancy fee of US\$1,500 a day in the mid-1980s from Monsanto, then a major chemical company and now better known for its GM crops business.

While he was being paid by Monsanto, Sir Richard wrote to an Australian Royal Commission investigating the potentially cancer-causing properties of Agent Orange, made by Monsanto and used by the US in the Vietnam War. Sir Richard (who died in July 2005) said there was no evidence that the chemical caused cancer.

Documents seen by the *Guardian* reveal that Sir Richard was also paid a £15,000 fee by the Chemical Manufacturers Association and two other major companies, Dow Chemicals and ICI, for a review that largely cleared vinyl chloride, used in plastics, of any link with cancers apart from liver cancer—a conclusion with which the World Health Organization disagrees. Sir Richard's review was used by the manufacturers' trade association to defend the chemical for more than a decade.

The revelations will dismay scientists and other admirers of Sir Richard's pioneering work and fuel a rift between the majority who support his view that the evidence shows cancer is a product of modern lifestyles, and those environmentalists who argue that chemicals and pollution must be to blame for soaring cancer rates.

(Source: *The Guardian, UK*, 8 December 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/story/0,,1967386,00.html>)

## BIRDS FALL FROM THE SKY

Thousands of birds have fallen from the sky over Esperance in Western Australia—and no one knows why.

Autopsies conducted in Perth have shed no light on the mystery of whether it is an illness, a toxin or a natural phenomenon that's to blame.

The main casualties are wattle birds, yellow-throated miners, New Holland honeyeaters and singing honeyeaters, although some dead crows, hawks and pigeons have also been found.

Wildlife officers are baffled by the

"catastrophic" event, which the Department of Environment and Conservation said began well before last week's freak storm at Esperance, which was declared a natural disaster zone as a result.

District nature conservation co-ordinator Mike Fitzgerald said the first reports of birds dropping dead in people's yards came in three weeks ago, but the calls stopped suddenly last week—reportedly because no birds were left.

(Source: *The Australian*, 10 January 2007)

## MICROORGANISMS ENGINEERED FOR ENERGY

A recent report from the secretive JASON scientific advisory group considers the feasibility of using microorganisms to produce fuels such as hydrogen or ethanol as a metabolic product.

"Microorganisms present a great opportunity for energy science," the JASON report to the US Department of Energy said.

"Microorganisms are simpler than plants; they have smaller genomes and proteomes, and are easier to manipulate and culture. The enormous biodiversity of microorganisms presents a broad palette of starting points for engineering. Microorganisms already make many metabolic products, some of which are useful fuels.

"Boosting the efficiency of fuel formation from microorganisms is an important research challenge for the twenty-first century."

The JASONS do not publish even their



unclassified reports in an orderly or consistent fashion. A copy of the new report was obtained by *Secrecy News*. See "Engineering Microorganisms for Energy Production", JSR-05-300, 23 June 2006 (92 pages, 1.1 MB) at <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/dod/jason/micro.pdf>. (Source: *Secrecy News*, no. 127, 14 December 2006)

## US BIOWARFARE CAPABILITIES DEVELOPED IN SECRET

The costliest, most grandiose research scheme ever attempted having germ warfare capability is going forward under US President Bush and in apparent defiance of international treaties such as the Geneva Convention of 1925 that bans biological and toxic agents in weaponry.

Some 113 university, government, hospital and corporate laboratories engaged in research—often with potential to be used for germ warfare—have refused to disclose their operations to the public as required by Federal rules, a non-profit watchdog agency has charged.

Instead of shutting their operations down, however, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), of Bethesda, Maryland—the government agency tasked with oversight of these laboratories—allows them to continue to operate. This is a peculiar stance for an entity that describes itself as "the steward of medical and behavioral research for the Nation".

From California to New Jersey and from Boston to San Antonio, often in the heart of major centres of population, biological

warfare labs lavishly financed with their share of about US\$20 billion by the Bush administration since 2001 are literally crawling with deadly germs from Spanish flu to plague to anthrax to tularaemia to Rift Valley fever. Reportedly, in some of the laboratories security is lax and safety procedures inadequate to protect the public from exposure to deadly pathogens.

Under US law, recipients of Federal funds for biotech research must comply with guidelines issued by the NIH. These include making available to the public the minutes of the labs' Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) meetings, describing their operations and plans. In a number of instances, these IBCs have never bothered to hold a meeting. In other cases, the minutes they furnish are devoid of substance.

Basically, their operations in many cases are being kept secret, according to the watchdog Sunshine Project of Austin, Texas, a non-profit organisation that attempts to protect the public from the risks of biotechnology experiments.

The 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), which the US signed, prohibits research on offensive biological weapons. If the work is performed in secret, however, weapons designed for offensive use could be concealed. In the 1930s, the Japanese military masked its secret germ warfare scheme as a water purification project.

(Source: *Sherwood Ross, Global Research*, 7 January 2006, via <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=29598>)

## AMERICA HAS MOST PRISONERS

A US Justice Department report released in November 2006 showed that a record seven million people—or one in every 32 adults—were behind bars, on probation or on parole at the end of 2005. Of the total, 2.2 million were in prison.

According to the International Centre for Prison Studies at King's College in London, more people are behind bars in the US than in any other country. China ranks second with 1.5 million prisoners, followed by Russia with 870,000. The US incarceration rate of 737 per 100,000 people is the highest, followed by 611 in Russia. In contrast, the incarceration rates in many Western industrial nations range around 100 per 100,000 people.

"The United States has five per cent of the world's population and 25 per cent of the world's incarcerated population. We rank first in the world in locking up our fellow citizens," said Ethan Nadelmann of the Drug Policy Alliance, which supports alternatives in the war on drugs.

"We send more people to prison, for more different offences, for longer periods of time than anybody else," he said. "We now imprison more people for drug law violations than all of Western Europe, with a much larger population, incarcerates for all offences."

In the US, the wrongful conviction rate is extremely high. One reason is that hardly any of the convicted have had a jury trial. In the US criminal justice system, more than 95 per cent of all felony cases are settled with a plea bargain. This is because any defendant who stands trial faces more severe penalties if found guilty than if he agrees to a plea bargain. To discourage trials, prosecutors offer defendants reduced charges and lighter sentences than would result from a jury conviction.

In the event a defendant insists upon his innocence, prosecutors pile on charges until the defendant's lawyer and family convince the defendant that a jury is likely to give a conviction on at least one of the many charges and that the penalty will be greater than a negotiated plea.

It has become a process whereby a defendant is coerced into admitting to a crime in order to escape more severe punishment for maintaining his innocence.

Many of the crimes for which people are imprisoned never occurred. They are made-up crimes created by the process of negotiation to close a case.

(Source: *Reuters*, 9 December 2006)



**EURO NOTES CASH IN TO OVERTAKE US DOLLAR**

The value of euro notes in circulation exceeds the value of circulating US-dollar notes, according to calculations by the *Financial Times*. Converted at recent exchange rates, the euro took the lead in October 2006.

The figures highlight the remarkable growth in euro notes since their launch on 1 January 2002, three years after the start of Europe's monetary union.

Although the European Central Bank (ECB) does not deliberately promote the international use of the euro, it has become popular in official foreign exchange reserves—even if it is far from challenging the dollar's lead as the most popular reserve currency.

Fast growth in the highest denomination notes, especially the 500-euro note, has raised suspicions that they are popular among criminals, although the ECB plays down this factor.

(Source: *The Financial Times, UK, 27 December 2006*)

**EVIDENCE OF CONCRETE IN GIZA'S PYRAMIDS**

Were the pyramids of Giza in Egypt partly built of concrete? A debate on the idea that has smouldered for over 20 years has been re-ignited by Michel Barsoum of Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and two colleagues who analysed three stone samples from the Great Pyramid of Khufu.

The team found that two samples included amorphous silicon-containing material, which they say is a concrete "glue" that holds the pyramid's stone blocks together (*Journal of the American Ceramic Society*, vol. 89, p. 3788).

"If there is any rock in the world like this, it hasn't been reported in any literature I'm familiar with," Barsoum says. He believes that up to 20 per cent of the edifices may have been built using this material.

The idea that the Egyptians used concrete to build the pyramids was first proposed by Joseph Davidovits in 1986.

Barsoum is now recreating the primitive concrete in his lab. He claims that using only limestone, diatomaceous earth, lime and water—all readily available to ancient Egyptians—he has made a compound that rivals the strongest modern concrete.

(Source: *New Scientist, issue no. 2581, 11 December 2006, p. 6*)

**BEWARE OF GARDASIL, THE CERVICAL CANCER VACCINE**

Gardasil is the new vaccine being intensively marketed to the parents of girls from the age of nine. The vaccine is said to protect against two strains of the human papilloma virus (HPV), which it is believed cause about 70 per cent of cervical cancers. But HPV is very common and can be found in about 80 per cent of both men and women. Most of us at one time or another have had the HPV virus, but most of us do not suffer or die from cervical cancer. In fact, only one per cent of women develop cervical cancer. The year 2000 figures on the mortality rates for cervical cancer were 3.3 women per 100,000 population in the USA and four women per 100,000 in Australia.

The US National Cancer Institute says that direct causation has not been proven. In a controlled study of age-matched women, 67 per cent of those with cervical cancer and 43 per cent of those without were found to be HPV positive. These cancers are observed on average only 20 to 50 years after infection.<sup>1</sup> So what is going on? Does this virus cause cervical cancer?

Nicholas Regush wrote in *Vaccine Madness*: "Back in 1992, however, a question was raised about the dominant and increasingly entrenched theory that HPV causes cervical cancer. It came from Peter Duesberg and Jody Schwartz, molecular biologists at the University of California at Berkeley. Among the various issues they raised about the acceptance of HPV as the cause of cervical cancer was their fundamental concern that there was a lack of consistent HPV DNA sequences and consistent HPV gene expression in tumours that were HPV positive. They instead suggested that 'rare spontaneous or chemically induced chromosome abnormalities which are consistently observed in HPV DNA-negative and -positive cervical cancers induce cervical cancer'." In short, Duesberg and Schwartz were pointing to the possibility that "carcinogens may be primary inducers of abnormal cell proliferation rather than HPV". Here's the key point: "Since proliferating cells [cancer cells dividing wildly] would be more susceptible to infection than resting cells, the viruses would just be indicators rather than causes of abnormal proliferation."<sup>2</sup>

How, then, have we come to the conclusion that the human papilloma virus causes cervical cancer? Scientists estimate that about 80 per cent of all cancers are related to the use of tobacco products, to what we eat and drink, or, to a lesser extent, to exposure to radiation or cancer-causing agents in the environment and the workplace.<sup>3</sup> Maybe the truth is that carcinogens, not viruses, cause the abnormal cell proliferation.

One would hope and expect that the cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil has been well tested and is safe to inject into girls and possibly boys. But according to the Alliance for Human Research Protection (AHRP), this is *not* the case. AHRP says that the vaccine has *not* been proven safe and effective in clinical trials. The fact is that the US Food and Drug Administration allowed Merck to use a potentially reactive aluminium-containing placebo as a control for most trial participants, rather than a non-reactive saline solution placebo. This aluminium placebo is used because it can artificially increase the appearance of safety of an experimental drug or vaccine in a clinical trial. Furthermore, the Gardasil vaccine contains 225 mcg of aluminium, and we know that aluminium adjuvants in vaccines can allow aluminium to enter the brain as well as cause inflammation at the injection site, leading to chronic joint and muscle pain and fatigue. Around 60 per cent of those who were given Gardasil or the aluminium placebo suffered side effects such as headache, fever, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, diarrhoea and myalgia, but the Gardasil recipients had more serious adverse events such as headache, gastroenteritis, appendicitis, pelvic inflammatory disease, asthma, bronchospasm and arthritis.<sup>4</sup>

So with cervical cancer causing about one per cent of all cancer deaths in women and with the causation in doubt, not to mention the lack of safety displayed in the vaccine trials, we need to ask why parents are being urged to get their young daughters vaccinated with Gardasil. The obvious answer is that there is much hanging on the success of Gardasil. It is predicted that Gardasil could be Merck's most important money earner, with expected sales of at least US\$2 billion. This is revenue that Merck badly needs after the Vioxx scandals. To achieve this success, Gardasil will be required for school admission.<sup>5</sup>

**Endnotes**

1. <http://www.virusmyth.net/aids/data/pdlatvir3.htm>;
2. [http://www.redflagsweekly.com/second\\_opinion/2002\\_nov25.html](http://www.redflagsweekly.com/second_opinion/2002_nov25.html);
3. [http://www.medicinenet.com/cancer\\_causes/page2.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/cancer_causes/page2.htm);
4. <http://www.ahrp.org/cms/content/view/263/28/>;
5. <http://www.honesthuman.com>

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